

Community Champions Explainer and Expression of Interest Form

Worker Rights Education and Support Program for migrant and
refugee communities in Queensland

Our Vision

We want all workers to experience dignity at work, feeling safe, being paid properly, and in secure jobs.

Refugee and migrant workers, as much as their communities, face complex working-related challenges and experience a high level of fear about their future. We want to support and equip them to be able to achieve work dignity, safety, and secure sustainable employment.

We are bringing together multicultural community members with organisations that work closely with people to act on workplace rights issues.

What is the problem we want to change?

Through Queensland Community Alliance (QCA) listening processes with communities back in 2021-2022, a commissioned study developed by QUT, and especially through the contributions made by Community Champions during the first year of existence of this program, we know now that many migrant community members experience workplace exploitation. This includes things like unsafe work, underpayment, sexual harassment, and being discriminated against.

It is normal for people who experience work-related exploitation to fear taking action. This includes fear about losing their job, or about being excluded and abused, or about having their visa status used against them.

In these circumstances, many people from multicultural communities normally talk to “trusted people/sources” in their community to get advice. This might be elders, faith leaders, those who are knowledgeable on particular issues, community association representatives, or communication channels such as WhatsApp groups.

The focus of this project is to build knowledge and confidence amongst those current and potential trusted sources within communities.

What are we trying to change?

We want to identify those who are the current and potential trusted people in their own communities.

We will train them to be Community Champions around workplace rights so that they can support personal and collective actions within their own communities.

Once they have completed this training and develop key relationships with others in the project partnership, Community Champions will be able to plan and support actions with their community members to help them overcome uncertainty and fear, connect with existing support services, and address workplace exploitation.

Community Champions training will include:

- Building relationships and networks with community members with similar exposure to the issue of work exploitation.
- Building relationships and networks with partner organisations that have issue expertise including unions, community organisations and services.
- Providing information about workplace rights from official government sources and other service providers.
- Learning how workplace exploitation affects people's wellbeing and tips for providing some initial support if needed.
- Skilling in community listening exercises to learn lived experiences of work exploitation from affected community members.
- Making plans together for personal and collective actions.

To make this project effective we are looking for potential Community Champion. We are looking for people who are a trusted person in their community, or someone who wants to become a trusted person by building strong, authentic, respectful relationships, and have passion for positive change in your community.

What will a Community Champion actually do?

The Community Champions will have a total of 50 hours of paid work over a 6-month period. This is a casual position with a salary level of 2.4 in the SCHADS award. This time will include:

- Training workshops that will occur either on weekends or weekdays after working hours. Specific times and dates to be confirmed.
- Engage in initial conversations or interactions with their community to educate on worker rights in Australia and avenues for support if experiencing workplace exploitation.
- Facilitate sessions or initiatives in your own community to understand:
 - What is the experience of exploitation/unfair treatment at work?
 - What stops people from acting when they experience exploitation?
 - What would help to address this issue?
- Make plans with other partners to address workplace rights exploitation in your community and work together to implement these plans from a trauma-informed practice perspective.
- Attend a group session to provide feedback and evaluate the development of program activities.

What you need to do to register?

- Have the support of your community to be a Community Champion. Support can be demonstrated by a letter, email, or any other referral document. If you believe this does not apply to you, please tell us and we will discuss options.
- Express your interest to WorkersRightsProject@mcaus.org.au by including:
 - Filled EOI form (attached). Please be aware EOI form allows for both individual and group applications, so when possible, find 1-3 people in your community who want to be Community Champions with you.
 - Resume
 - Cover letter (1 page max)
 - Community support letter, email, or referral (as explained above).

Applications close by Sunday 2 June, 2024. To discuss this role and application process, please contact Carlos Estrada-Grajales on 0499 151 430 or Septime Akimana on 0432 184 507.

When is this happening?

This program is going to be developed over 4 years. Each year we will work with a different group of Community Champions and the communities that they are part of.

We have successfully trained a first group of Community Champions from different multicultural communities in Queensland.

For the third group of Community Champions, we will work with successful participants from June to September 2024.

If you are interested in being part of this program, please let us know ASAP, even if you might not be ready to get started yet.